



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

Rome, NY

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Rome for a Brownfields Pilot. The project area is a 17-acre brownfield in the 200-acre Rome industrial area, which is adjacent to the central business district and in a State Economic Development Zone. The initial site assessment indicated the potential for redevelopment independent of subsurface and groundwater remediation, if contact with these media is prevented.

About 25 percent of the residents in the area surrounding the business district live below the poverty line, and 11 percent are unemployed, almost double the City's overall rate. The preliminary environmental site assessment of the industrial area found lead contamination in soils and chlorinated solvent contamination in groundwater. Additional contamination is suspected from previous pickling, lead working, metal plating, printing, and machining operations.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of Rome's brownfields effort is to redevelop the 200-acre industrial area into a light industrial park. The City is working to implement a coordinated approach that solicits the involvement of the 18 property owners in the industrial park to work

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Rome, New York

Date of Award:
September 1996

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets a 17-acre business park adjacent to Rome's central business district that is contaminated from former metal plating, pickling, printing, and machine operations.

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<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

together on complementary environmental and economic goals. Environmental investigation technologies developed at the Department of Defense's Rome Laboratories will be used in the assessment of the demonstration site. Community involvement and a program to facilitate replication of the program are integral to the project's objectives.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Completed a Phase I site assessment, which included a visual inspection, and sampling. This assessment also confirmed that there is some contamination present at the site, including surface soils that have been impacted by metals from the long history of wire and metalware production.

The Pilot is:

- Conducting further environmental site assessments and updating a redevelopment plan for the site with assessment information;
- Establishing legal mechanisms, such as letters of intent, to follow up with property owners and regulators;
- Using the Brownfields Task Force to produce a community newsletter, create public forums, and inform and involve the adjacent neighborhoods; and
- Recording and documenting the process for replication at other brownfields sites.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Rome Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- Buildings on the site have been demolished as part of the redevelopment effort.
- A risk assessment investigation of the redevelopment area will be developed based on the findings from the Pilot. It will be aided by an agreement between the City of Rome, EPA, the New York State Technology Enterprise Corporation

(NYSTEC), and Rome Laboratories. Through a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement, the City and EPA will have access to new, innovative, and cost-saving tools for assessing subsurface conditions, while at the same time providing the Laboratories and NYSTEC with a test bed for new tools and techniques.

- The Brownfields Task Force has developed a preliminary redevelopment plan for the site. The plan includes the construction of a new access road and subdivision of the site into smaller parcels for individual manufacturers/light industrial following a comprehensive demolition program. These smaller parcels have the potential for employing up to 50 employees, increasing manufacturing employment for the City.
- One business adjacent to the business park site has announced plans to expand from their property into the project site. Another local business has plans to expand their facilities within the business park. Additional parcels of the business park will soon be made available. Past redevelopment projects that had been attempted at this site have been reviewed to determine possible reasons for their failure.